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## Writing Grade 8

Scoring Guide with  
Annotated Student Papers





“Swedish Boy Knitting” by Anna Riwkin--Photo Researchers  
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# **DAY 1 DAY 1 DAY 1**

## **PREWRITING AND DRAFTING**

**TOPIC:**

**Facing a challenge**

**THINKING ABOUT THE TOPIC:**

Helen Keller, who was both deaf and blind, and grew up to become a fine writer and speaker, said,  
“...we could never learn to be brave and patient, if there were only joy in the world.”

“You must do the thing you think you cannot do.”

Eleanor Roosevelt

“Challenges make you discover things about yourself that you never really knew. They’re what  
make the instrument stretch—what make you go beyond the norm.”

Cicely Tyson

“What doesn’t kill me makes me stronger.”

Albert Camus

# **DAY 1 DAY 1 DAY 1**

## **DIRECTIONS:**

Continue to think about the topic and the materials you looked at earlier.

With your partners, go through the questions below. You may go through them in any order you wish as long as everyone has an opportunity to respond. You may wish to spend more time on the questions that most interest you and your partners. You will have 10 minutes to discuss these.

## **TALKING ABOUT THE TOPIC:**

- Tell about a time you successfully faced a challenge.
- What are some of the smaller challenges you have faced? Have you ever lost a homework assignment? Lost the key to your house? Had to fix something you broke?
- What are some of the larger challenges you might face? Have you ever had to tell the truth even when you knew it would be difficult? Had to move to a new town? Had to speak or perform in front of an audience? Had to compete in sports? Had to rebuild after a fire or flood?

# DAY 1 DAY 1 DAY 1

WRITING ABOUT THE TOPIC:

Many people are able to learn and grow from personal challenges. **Write about facing a challenge.**

You might, for example, do **one** of the following:

write about a time you successfully faced something you were afraid to do

**OR**

tell about your most difficult challenge

**OR**

discuss what a person can learn from facing a challenge

**OR**

describe how a person you admire has faced a challenge

**OR**

write about the topic in another way.

You may use examples from real life, from what you read or watch, or from your imagination. Your writing will be read by interested adults.

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(You may use this area and the following pages for freewriting, clustering, outlining, webbing, listing, etc. When you are ready, you may begin your draft.)

### Holistic Scorepoint Descriptions Grade 8

Here is an explanation of what readers think about as they score your writing.

- 4** The central idea is clear and focused, and the writer uses creative, insightful detail. The organization helps unify the piece, and moves the reader easily through the text. The voice of the writer comes through in the rich and precise word choice and effective use of varied sentence structure. The text demonstrates varied use of standard writing conventions with few errors.
- 3** The central idea is clear and focused, and the writer adds basic detail. Overall organization is apparent but may be too obviously structured; there may be extraneous detail which interferes with unity. The writing demonstrates varied sentence structure as well as appropriate word choices, including some engaging vocabulary. Surface feature errors may occasionally distract the reader, but they don't interfere with understanding.
- 2** The central idea is somewhat developed and the writer includes some detail. However, focus may shift and some details may be extraneous. An attempt at organization is apparent although ideas may lack a sense of wholeness. Vocabulary is limited or inappropriate to the task; sentence structure may be simple. Surface feature errors make understanding difficult.
- 1** The writing may show little or no development of a central idea, or may be too limited in length to demonstrate proficiency. Organization may be lacking or may seem arbitrary. Vocabulary is limited; sentences may be choppy, incomplete, or rambling. Numerous surface feature errors may severely interfere with understanding.

Not ratable if:

**off-task**

**illegible**

**written in a language other than English**

**blank/refused to respond**

Begin writing on this page.

Write your response using an ink pen only. DO NOT use correction fluid (white out).  
No additional paper should be used, extra paper will not be scored.

~~One time I had to study for a big test. And  
like it was hard, because the test really hard; difficult. So  
I studied real hard for that, and then I took the test  
and I got B on it.~~

I want to tell you about a very important  
challenge. When I was 9 years old, I tried  
to fly like Superman so I jumped off a  
2 story house and cracked my head open  
and had a concussion. I've never accomplished  
my ~~challenge~~ challenge to fly like Superman, but I  
intend to!

**Score 1**

This response provides a clear, concise summary of the central idea, the challenge of trying to fly like Superman, in one sentence. It is too minimal to demonstrate proficiency.

Begin writing on this page.

Write your response using an ink pen only. DO NOT use correction fluid (white out).  
No additional paper should be used, extra paper will not be scored.

One day I was going Sleding with my mom  
G and my brother J. We had this big hill  
that we had to go down. Then at the bottom  
of the hill was tree's that we had to sled around.

Then we was ready to go down the hill then I  
went down the hill but I mist but the secent  
tree I hit then I lad ther for a minute  
then I got up I felt desy. Then I walk  
up the hill then I was serd to go back down  
but I went back down the I wasent serd to  
go back down.

Then me and my brother J ~~went~~ went to  
this ather hill to go selding. Then we went down  
the hill for the frst time. Then we desided to  
~~make~~ make a ramp then we did. Then we walk up the  
hill then we went down then I hit the ramp then  
I fell off but I tried a agona.

**Score 1**

There is a recognizable central idea here about a day of sledding. Lack of organization and direction, rambling sentences and numerous surface feature errors combine to make understanding difficult, as in the following sentence: *Then I walk up the hill then I was serd [scared] to go back down but I went back down the [then] I wasent serd to go backdown.*



Begin writing on this page.

Write your response using an ink pen only. DO NOT use correction fluid (white out).  
No additional paper should be used, extra paper will not be scored.

I know that many people face challenges in there life. And many people learn from these challenges. If nobody faces any challenges this wouldn't be life. People can learn how to be nice to each other and not be Prejudice. People can learn how to handle things and care for things. People can learn how to be helpful. People can also learn how to face there own challenges and to help people face there challenges.

Some challenges are harder than others. What you learn from these challenges should be passed on to other people. Other people who faced many challenges should help other people face challenges this person is called a counselor. People can learn to use positive thoughts not negative thoughts. And people learn how to say yes I can! And trying really hard to do something. Many people should learn things and take advantage of learning and help other people face challenges weather there big, small hard or easy people should help.

**Score 1**

Although most of the sentences in this response are clear in isolation, the separate ideas are not developed, connected or organized well. The result sounds like a list of vague slogans that are strung together: *I know that many people face challenges in there life. And many people learn from these challenges. If nobody faces any challenges this wouldn't be life. People can learn how to be nice to each other and not be prejudice.*

Begin writing on this page.

Write your response using an ink pen only. DO NOT use correction fluid (white out).  
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I have To do a lot of difficult stuff. It can be fun and It can be hard. History is a ~~very~~ challenge and it is boring. Math is fun but hard. Moving to a new school is hard because people laugh at you or make fun of you because you are new. And sometimes you have to perform in front and get very very inbarist and people outburst laughing at you. So I Try To make a friend and get laught at.

A challenge for me is when me and my brother resle somtime i win. Most The time he will beat me and sometimes he will beat me very fast. My brother name is Shannon he is nice but he can be mean. I am a resler and I Think I will have a lot of challenge went I go To a meet. And I might get beat. My brother is

cool I Think. My brother love  
To farm he like To do  
hard work he like To make  
stuff he want To be a micanice.

**Score 1**

This response provides a little detail ("A challenge for me is when me and my brother resle [wrestle] sometime i win."), but lacks focus and organization. It begins with a list of disconnected ideas about what is hard and/or a challenge, then drifts off at the end with: *My brother is cool I think. My brother love to farm he like to do hard work he like to make stuff he want to be a micanice [mechanic]*. Severe surface feature errors in spelling, capitalization and punctuation contribute to the difficulty in reading this piece.

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Begin writing on this page.

Write your response using an ink pen only. DO NOT use correction fluid (white out). No additional paper should be used, extra paper will not be scored.

After school I went to wrestling practice like usual. When I got there we were assigned partners. I had to ~~to~~ wrestle a really big guy named L. He's huge! He overpowered me by a lot. When we started to ~~we~~ wrestle, I tried to put him in a ~~he~~ hip toss but he blocked it and threw me down. He put me in a chicken wings but I got out of it. Once I made a little mistake, he put me in a ~~red~~ cradle and pinned me.

It was a challenge for me ~~for~~ because of his ~~size~~ ~~age~~ and experience, size and strength.

**Score 2**

This tightly focused piece about being pinned in wrestling practice is sequentially organized. It is somewhat developed with a few details (hip toss, chicken wing, cradle), but more development with relevant detail and explanation are needed for a higher score. The student could describe/explain these wrestling terms to provide a clearer picture for the reader.

Begin writing on this page.

Write your response using an ink pen only. DO NOT use correction fluid (white out).  
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Oppositions can be helpful when you face them. You can learn & become stronger from oppositions. As Albert Camus said "What doesn't kill me makes me stronger."

One way an opposition can be helpful & make you stronger is if you leave something behind. Your math assignment or house key, the next time you leave you will be more careful to grab what you need.

Another way an opposition can be helpful & make you stronger is if you face your opposition. Then you will learn how to beat it & it will be easier to beat the next time.

A third way an opposition can be helpful & make you stronger is you can find your limitations. If a friend pressures you into doing something you can find out if you can or can't do it.

There are many oppositions that all  
give you exsperience & help in facing the  
ch oppositions of Life.

**Score 2**

There is an attempt to organize this response through the use of five paragraphs, with three different approaches to the topic of challenges mentioned in the three body paragraphs. There is also an attempt to connect each approach to the central idea in the introduction that "You can learn + beome stronger from oppositions" by repeating this idea at the beginning of each paragraph. However, each of the three approaches is only minimally developed with one vague sentence each. More specific details to develop the ideas would be needed for a higher score.

Begin writing on this page.

Write your response using an ink pen only. DO NOT use correction fluid (white out).  
No additional paper should be used, extra paper will not be scored.

One day I came home from school and the door was locked as it usually is. But that day I didn't have a key. I started to get mad and was banging on the door when I realized I couldn't get in from the door. So I went and checked the back door. It was locked too. I got home at 3:30 and my mom gets home at 5:30 so I couldn't wait that long in the freezing weather. Then I thought of climbing in through a window. I went to check them but they were all locked. The only one that was unlocked was the living room window. But it was jammed. As I was trying to open it one half fell sideways and broke, so I just broke all the glass away and climbed thru. As I was getting thru the window my dog attacked me because he didn't know who I was at first. But after all that I made it in the house with only scratches. But when my parents got home they were really mad.

**Score 2**

This response about getting in the house without a key has some development, some detail and some organization. Like many papers at this level, words such as "So," and "But," are overused to the point of being repetitive. What could have been presented as a pretty harrowing experience seems flat, leaving the reader with no real feel for why this particular challenge even stuck out to be the main event of this paper. There is no more importance given to the facts of his own dog attacking him and his parents being "really mad" than to the sentence "One day I came home from school and the door was locked as it usually is."

Begin writing on this page.

Write your response using an ink pen only. DO NOT use correction fluid (white out).  
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Dear challenged person,

It is normal to face challenges in life. Facing a challenge is something everybody has to do. Facing a challenge is a very difficult thing. There are many different types of challenges. Remember, when you face that slow and steady wins the race.

I think most challenges are a good thing to have. I believe that they bring out the hardwork and effort that people have inside. Without challenges, life would probably be very dull and boring. Challenges are what make people believe in themselves. Don't give up on any of your challenges.

I think challenges revolve into four main groups, good challenges, bad challenges, big challenges, and small challenges. Let's start with good challenges. Good challenges don't get you in trouble, or involved with drugs and alcohol. Good challenges are mostly all fun and games. Now, bad challenges are the ones who will get you in trouble. Bad challenges are usually very complicated. Bad things happen in life and the only thing we can do is try to stay out of trouble.



Furthermore, big challenges are major problems you have in your life. Let's say you lost your house because it was in a tornado, finding a new house would be a big challenge. Now, say you got in a little fight with one of your friends in school. That would probably be a small problem. Small challenges and small problems are the same thing. A small problem is something that happens to you, but really doesn't bother you all that much. Many people confuse big challenges and small problems. Life is full of bumpy roads, take it nice and slow.

In conclusion challenges occur everyday in life. Some might surprise you. When you are facing a challenge try to stay focused. Challenges are a major part of life. Don't abuse the good challenges you get in life, or you might get a big problem. Try to avoid all bad challenges, and you should do just fine. You need to recognize your challenge and proceed with caution.

Sincerely,

**Score 2**

This is a higher paper than guide paper number 3, but similar in that much of this paper sounds like a list of slogans: *Facing a challenge is something everybody has to do. Facing a challenge is a very difficult thing. There are usually many different types of challenges. Remember, when you face that slow and steady wins the race.* There are a few details, but the ideas generally sound vague. An attempt at organization is apparent, but the response does not seem clear and focused and does not have a sense of wholeness.

Begin writing on this page.

Write your response using an ink pen only. DO NOT use correction fluid (white out).  
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Have you ever faced a challenge or someone you love? Well my mom faced the biggest challenge of her life.

My mom is a very nice and beautiful person. The nice and beautiful lady had a big problem. Her problem was that she smoked heavily and everyone had to tell her to stop. Sometimes I would criticize her by calling her a druggie and telling her if she does not stop I will have to cut up all her cigarettes and throw them away.

Everytime we went out to the mall or anywhere she would take up the family's time and have a smoke. It seemed that my mom's cigarettes came before her family. I always told my mom time is everything because everytime she smokes a cigarette it takes minutes even hours off her life. Therefore my mom will die sooner, and I will not see that lovely person in my life.

My mom is a very special person to me. She's special because she is always there for me. Recently my mom quit smoking. The special person chews on gum, and eats mints to get her mind off smoking. My mother

is a very good role model, she thought me a big part in my life and what is to never smoke. I give my mom a lot of support because if she had no support she would start smoking again. Indeed my mother will always face what challenge what she smoked. But she will always remember what she did not do it on her own but it was a family thing.

**Score 3**

This response is developed with some relevant detail and remains very focused on the mother's problem of smoking and her challenge to stop. It has a sense of wholeness, is clear and has voice ("It seemed that my mom's cigarettes came before her family"). There are several surface feature errors, but they do not interfere with understanding.

Begin writing on this page.

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## Lifes Many Challenges

Along with, a challenge comes hard work and a lot of effort. The first challenge is playing a very difficult sport. Another thing mentioned will be moving to a new house. The very last challenge is the job interview.

Meanwhile, playing difficult sports is a very large challenge for many people. The first challenge people face in sports is getting along very well with your team members. The next

Challenge to sports is handling the object of the game well. Until you are totally physically fit, fast sports will be almost an impossible challenge, but it can be done. The last and most important challenge of sports is teamwork.

In fact, another challenge is moving to a new house. When you move you have great challenges like making new friends. When you move to a new home nothing is the same except your belongings you moved. The last hard challenge of moving is having weird neighbors all

around you and your house.

Along with, many challenges that people have comes one of the hardest the job interview. Some of the "challenges of a job interview are being serious, asking good questions and always use the interviewee's name. The hardest part is to fill out the resume neatly, and correctly. The final challenge of job interview is to follow up with a thank-you card.

To sum up, facing challenge every challenge is hard to master. All challenges always pay off in the end.

**Score 3**

The student tells the reader right in the introduction that three kinds of challenges will be presented. The transitions between the paragraphs are weak, but each challenge is presented with some basic relevant detail and clarity.

Begin writing on this page.

Write your response using an ink pen only. DO NOT use correction fluid (white out).  
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Recovering from the robbery was a hard challenge to overcome. I was in the fifth grade, it was the end of the day and I was getting off the bus when I saw a police car and my dad's truck in the drive way. This was unusual because I get home before my dad and there usually isn't a police car at our house. I walked up the stair to the top of the porch and saw that the house had been ransacked. The phone was knocked off the wall and the livingroom TV was gone. My dad was with the police officer answering questions and walking around the house with him. I dropped my backpack on the floor and took off my shoes and coat. I started walking through the house looking in disbelief. The hallway leading towards the bedrooms had dents and scrapes all off the walls. My sister's room was fine and so was mine, but my mom's and dad's room was a disaster.

By disaster I mean that the drawers were out and dumped on the floor. Their TV and VCR were stolen and my mom's jewelry was gone. My dad's guns and knife was stolen, also too. My mom asked the officer why nothing in the basement was stolen and he said that robbers rarely go down stairs.

After the police officer left the next task was to clean it all and record what was missing to report to the insurance company. The insurance company sent us a sheet that had a chart on it. The chart said, Stolen ~~it~~ item, when you ~~got~~ got it, and how much it was. Some-  
things were Christmas or birthday gives ~~had had to~~ and we did not know the price. We ended up making up a price, but on dad's 410 gauge he got it a long time ago ~~we~~ when he was 12 years old. So, the insurance company only gave us half of the cost.

Even though ~~gave~~ getting robbed is a bad experience some good things can come out of it. For example, my dad's 410 gauge was stolen so ~~for~~ from the money from the insurance company I got a 20 gauge. Also, I got a 270 rifle ~~to~~ to use when ~~for~~ I became 14 years old. A robbery is a bad thing to have to ~~deit~~ deal with and I hope that I never have to deal with it again.

**Score 3**

This narrative presents a very focused, clear picture of the aftermath of a robbery that occurred at home. The narrative has a sense of wholeness, as the author takes us along step-by-step, from getting off the bus and seeing the police car, to the description of each room, to dealing with the insurance company and, finally a lesson that has been learned as a result: *Even though being robbed is a bad experience some good things can come out of it. . . I hope that I never have to deal with it again.*



Begin writing on this page.

Write your response using an ink pen only. DO NOT use correction fluid (white out).  
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One challenge I have faced was moving to a new school. Like many other kids that move to new schools, I faced many difficulties. Some of the problems that I encountered were adjusting to a new school, making new friends, and leaving old friends behind. These hardships made moving to a new school a hard thing to do.

Moving is a hard thing to do and so is getting used to a new school. Getting up earlier was one of the tough things I had to do. It was hard changing from the 7:30 a.m. wake up time to the 5:00 a.m. wake up time of the country. Not only did I have to wake up earlier, but I had to be on a school bus longer because the houses were further apart. For the first month I fell asleep many times on the uncomfortable brown seats of the school bus. Then when I got to school we had to put our possessions in a corner of the classroom. My old school had been an old high school so I was used to having a locker to put my things in. The class was working on their times tables and I had just finished them at my former school. So, this made my adjusting a little easier.

Getting used to a new school was difficult, but making new friends was easier. I was lucky because my cousin J had told them I was coming. J introduced me to a lot of new people. The kids there were friendly and

so were the teachers. After a little while I started to fit in rather easily. I had liked this new school because I had made many new friends.

I had made many friends however, I still missed my old school and my old friends. The teachers at my previous school were fun and friendly. I was going to miss all the activities our class did with them. This school didn't go on as many trips either, so I definitely missed that. Besides the teachers, I had missed my friends. I still saw my best friend, B, but we weren't as good friends, and some of my friends I didn't see at all.

Although I missed my friends I had successfully faced a challenge. I had made new friends, got used to a new school, and missed my old school less. I enjoy Y and the people there, but I just hope I don't have to move again.

**Score 3**

This challenge of moving to a new school feels complete. The strongest part of this piece comes with specific relevant details supplied in contrasting life at the old school with the new: the bus ride was so long I fell asleep many times on the uncomfortable brown seats of the school bus. . . we had to put our possessions in a corner of the classroom. My old school had been an old high school so I was used to having a locker to put my things in.

Begin writing on this page.

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Facing Challenges is one issue that seems to be persistently popping up in my mind. This issue simply cannot, and will not be ignored. Well, at least not by me. Here are only a few of the challenges that people seem to face everyday.

First of all, the big issue, MOVING! Parents finding jobs in different cities. That behavior is inexcusable, at least to me and every other on the verge of destruction teenager. Anyway, this enormous issue of moving keeps coming up wherever I go. I should know, because I myself am a mover. I moved from Chicago, Illinois to, you guessed it, Michigan. I was still a young one when we moved, five to be exact, so it didn't have as much of an impact on me as if I were fifteen. Oh believe you me, it had some impact, but I was able to overcome the big issue of moving. I set my tears and feelings aside, for a millisecond, and continued on with my life. Even though it was hard at first, I was soon able to make a

plethora of friends and live my life as I should, happily.

Moving on, another challenge that many young people have to face is divorce. This breaks my heart when young people have to deal with this. All of the closed doors, custody battles, lawyers, and unhappiness. It just isn't fair to them. I know how a lot of kids feel because I come from divorced parents. Although it's been four years since their divorce it's still hard to see my mom and dad not together.

But, after all the long talks, tears, and emotional outbursts I was able to deal with my parents' divorce and continue on with my life, even if I didn't have both parents in the same household.

Finally the biggest challenge that certain people have to face is having a disability, such as paraplegia, dwarfism, etc. I have to give these fine people a monster-truck load of credit. Being able to make it in such a prejudiced world is amazing. Their thirst for life is compelling and their willingness to live every day to the full, truly makes me feel that the pretty

things in life, i.e. the latest fashions, the largest houses, don't matter. What matters the most ~~the most~~ is happiness and loving yourself for who you are. These people face challenges every day, but look how successful and, more importantly, happy they are. In my opinion, they are truly model Americans.

From everything I've explained above, I hope you have a deeper understanding ~~one~~ of my place on facing challenges. ~~Everyone~~ Everyone faces some sort of challenge in their life, but it's the people who are able to overcome them or deal with them, that seem to stick out in my mind. ~~What~~ With this little tid-bit in mind, what ~~do~~ do you think?

**Score 4**

This student clearly illustrates an expository approach to three kinds of challenges with relevant personal examples. Varied, precise word choices add interest and voice to the paper, such as: *on the verge of destruction teenager, I was still a young one when we moved, and I set my tears and feelings aside for a millisecond.*

Begin writing on this page.

Write your response using an ink pen only. DO NOT use correction fluid (white out). No additional paper should be used, extra paper will not be scored.

Imagine that you cannot see, hear, and cannot communicate with anyone else in the world. Doesn't it sound frightening? Well, for most of her life, a woman named Helen Keller had to live like this every day.

Helen Keller was born with a disease that made her blind <sup>and</sup> deaf. Because of these disabilities, she had no means of communication, so she could not be disciplined as a child. She acted like an animal, doing what she pleased when she pleased, because she could not understand any chastisement directed towards her. Her parents thought that it would be this way forever, until one day, a woman named Annie Sullivan came to work with Helen. Annie disciplined Helen by isolating her from her family until she understood right from wrong, and then taught her the one-hand manual alphabet. Annie would place <sup>her</sup> ~~Helen's~~ hands over Helen's and sign to her so Helen could feel the letters. Later in her life, Helen even learned to talk. She got degrees from college and became a world-famous speaker and writer.

Helen Keller had all <sup>of</sup> ~~the~~ the odds against her. However, she still overcame her disabilities, beating the odds. Because of hard work, dedication, and love, she was able to achieve a great deal in life. Anyone can become like Keller if he or she only put their heart and mind into realizing his or her dream.

I recently faced a challenge which was not nearly as great as Keller's, but it was large and important enough for me to be nervous about it. My Hindu religion class was being part of a celebration with

other classes in the area. A part which I had in the celebration was to sing along with two of my other friends. I had a few solos, which I was worried about. I was incredibly anxious that when I started singing, I would forget the words, or that my voice would break. The audience consisted of at least one-thousand people. However, once I got out on the stage, I just let the music carry me, and the crowd loved our performance. ~~My~~ My challenge was incredibly ironic, because we were singing a song called, "Hero." The lyrics went, "Lord knows / Dreams are hard to follow / But don't let anyone / Take them away." We followed this advice and didn't let anyone tell us that we could not perform. We put our hearts into our performance, and because of our hard work, ~~and~~ weeks of practicing, and confidence in ourselves, we sang the best that ~~we~~ ever had.

Small challenges like this, along with larger challenges, make you stronger and braver. If life was easy for ~~every~~ everyone, without any hardships, no one would know how to be determined, brave, or how to believe in yourself. Many times, when you first face a challenge, you may feel as if you can never overcome this trial of ~~your~~ courage. However, you soon learn that if you are dedicated and hard-working, you can achieve any feat, as in the case of this ~~little~~ girl.

A small girl went to the park one day. There, she saw a few older boys playing baseball. She asked them ~~if~~ <sup>if</sup> she could play, too, but they scoffed at her. "You are much too small to play baseball with us!" they ~~sneered~~ <sup>sneered</sup>. The girl felt terrible that they were teasing her, but she insisted on ~~playing~~ <sup>having a turn at bat</sup> anyway. When she stepped up to

the plate, and lifted the bat, she could barely even pick it up, it was so heavy for her. The pitcher threw the ball, and she struck out immediately. The girl felt disappointed that the boys were right, but instead of quitting, she just began practicing more. She came to the park every day and practiced hitting. Within a ~~few~~<sup>week</sup>, she was able to make connections with the ball, and within a month, she was able to hit it past the pitcher's mound. Every day she got better and better, until finally, a few years later, she was able to compete with even the oldest boys. Because of her steadfastness and tenacity, she succeeded in fulfilling her greatest dreams.

The story of the girl is fiction. However, her struggle to prove others wrong and overcome her difficulties is not fiction. All throughout history, there are true examples of people who have faced hardships, been persistent, and beaten the odds. When Galileo proposed the idea that the earth was not the center of the universe, he was thrown in prison for his "ridiculous" ideas. It was, of course, later proven that his theories were correct. Thomas Edison tried more than one-hundred times to get the light bulb to work. When he finally found the right material to carry the electricity, it revolutionized lighting in the world. During the 1920's, Susan B. Anthony and the women's suffragettes fought for women's voting rights. Most thought that their request would never be granted, but after several years, their perseverance was rewarded with an amendment to the Constitution granting women the right to vote.



When you face a challenge, large or small, you are ~~becoming~~  
~~stronger and braver~~ ~~challenged~~ in some way. You learn to overcome your  
difficulty, prove others wrong, and believe in yourself. Challenges  
are like little lessons that life teaches you throughout your  
existence. Learning to overcome those challenges can be the most  
important lesson you ever learn.

**Score 4**

In another expository approach, this student uses several historical figures, a personal and a fictional example to give multiple perspectives on challenges that people face. Each example is clear and detailed. Varied sentence structure and vocabulary are used effectively throughout the piece.

Begin writing on this page.

Write your response using an ink pen only. DO NOT use correction fluid (white out). No additional paper should be used, extra paper will not be scored.

Challenge. Just the word makes my ears prick up like Bambi near a hunter. My heart beats faster & my adrenaline starts to flow. This is one word that can make a boring, dull life into one big old vat of excitement. The dictionary definition of challenge is, "a call to prove one's courage, skill, etc." This may be what the book says, but it begs to differ. My definition is a short but sweet little saying. It is, "Challenge = An opportunity in disguise." Now according to that book, I'm dead wrong. But according to my life, I just hit it right on the button. Among others, wrestling, the dark, & dating are my challenges. We may be called to challenge, but what we really do, is learn from them.

My life is full of athletic activities, & one of my favorites is wrestling. In fact, if I were to make another definition of challenge, it would be wrestling. I mean, where else can you be stuck in a circle, with a man size, & be told to basically sit on him. Short of illegal activities, I don't think there is. Just last year I had my first taste of wrestling, & I loved it. So much that I won all my matches and was going into the league meet seeded second. Being this my first year, I was new to the atmosphere & fierce competition. Nevertheless, I swallowed those butterflies, stuck my chin up, & went out there and wrestled.

From the whistle to the end lasted about 10 seconds. I had pinned him, but this was far from over yet. I lost my next match to a more experienced wrestler who tricked me into pinning myself. It was my first loss of the season, and the taste was bittersweet. After dropping into the consolation bracket, I was to wrestle yet another wise opponent. But this time, I wasn't to be fooled. My challenge was to come from defeat only 40 minutes ago & beat a better wrestler. We went all three rounds and ended up with me winning on a 9-8 decision. I was happy as a free bird when I placed 4th at that meet. It was my first real-world challenge I had overcome.

While not playing sports, I usually like to eat & watch T.V. But my favorite thing to do is sleep. If you saw me tucked under my comforter, you could swear it was Rip Van Winkle himself. In fact, I love to napping so much, it helped me overcome one of my worst fears, the dark. Kids my age have usually mastered this dilemma, but when I was younger, it scared me to death. My brother, C., loved to torture me with stories of the Boogie man and how he was going to eat me. If you've ever seen a snow hare, that was about the color of my face. Dead white. When I went to bed at night I would huddle under the covers with my light on until I fell asleep.

My mom would come in & turn off the light after that. This worked for a few years, but it was soon to change. As I kept the light on I would stay up later & later, subsequently I was more tired in the morning. I was so sleepy that more than once, my face ended up in the cereal bowl. I finally faced the facts, I had to adjust. So when I went to bed I closed my eyes, turned the light off and tried to sleep. I eventually adapted to this & was over my fear of darkness.

As you can see, challenges help us through our lives. Whether we be children, teenagers or adults, we can all learn from them. By conquering my fears of darkness & competition, I've helped myself grow stronger. Maybe I'm ready for my next challenge, dating. There's a word that sends shivers down my spine. Hopefully though, there's still room in my navel for some more excitement, I think my heart can take it.

#### Score 4

The reader is engaged in this piece through examples of personal challenges in which the author good-naturedly pokes fun at himself. His voice and use of precise, varied word choices contribute to effectiveness and clarity, as in the following: *In fact, if I were to make another definition of challenge, it would be wrestling. I mean, where else can you be stuck in a circle with a man [your] size, & be told to basically sit on him. . . and If you saw me tucked under my comforter, you could swear it was Rip Van Winkle himself.*

Begin writing on this page.

Write your response using an ink pen only. DO NOT use correction fluid (white out). No additional paper should be used, extra paper will not be scored.

Have you ever faced a challenge? Well I have. It was September 23, and I was about to the National Anthem in front of 200 to 300 people on my guitar. This guitar is a 6-string Electric Danelectro. It is black with a white pick guard and a solid maple fret board. As I entered the building, everybody shook my hand and said something on the order of "You can do it." That is when I got really nervous.

It was now 7:30 pm, and the game was going to start in about 25 minutes. First to play was the 7th grade girls basketball team, and then the 8th grade girls came in. I went to a room all by myself and began to tune my guitar. I started with the lowest and proceeded to the highest string. As I got to the string that was not the highest, but one lower, it snapped. I remember the silver-nickel plated string snapping off, whipping me in the arm, and falling to the floor. That is when I decided I could not play.

I walked out the door to see the principal. He looked down at me and asked if I was ready. That is when I told him "I am sorry, but I won't be playing tonight. I broke one of my strings."

off my guitar." A good friend of mine happened to hear this, who also plays guitar, and offered me to use his guitar. Of course I took up on the offer.

As we ran out the door, I saw that the score board said only 7 minutes until I had to play. We raced to her house, grabbed her guitar, and raced back to the school. I ran in the gym and heard Mr. Th... say my name and say what I was going to be doing over the microphone. I plugged in my guitar and began to play.

As I began to play, I could feel sweat condensing on my forehead, dripping into my left eye. I was in misery, but I kept playing. My fingers were sore and my forehead felt like a saturated sponge, but I never gave up.

I finally finished to hear a great response from the audience, but one voice stood out from all the others. That was Mr. ... saying I did a great job.

**Score 4**

No extraneous information is given in this response, which is well controlled and extremely focused. Specific relevant details provide a clear picture of that night. Organization keeps the reader moving through the text. Vocabulary is precise and varied: *I remember the silver-plated string snapping off, whipping me in the arm; and falling to the floor.*